
THE BAPTISM, OR GIFT, OF THE HOLY GHOST.

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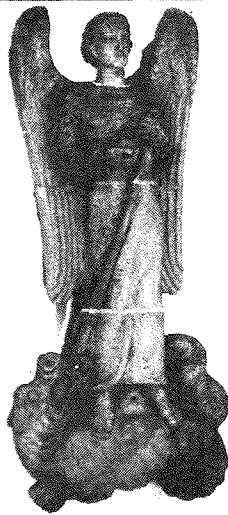
P. E. KRETZMANN, Ph. D., D. D.,

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.



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Introduction.

During recent years the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been brought into the foreground in a somewhat unpleasant manner by the activities of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, the Holy Rollers, and other sects. They have caused many of our Christian congregations throughout the country a great deal of trouble and in a number of instances have gained converts for their misrepresentation of the doctrine of the Third Article of our Christian faith. It is necessary, therefore, that our Christians be made acquainted with the truth of the Holy Scriptures concerning this very important doctrine, so that all visionary and falsely enthusiastic teachers of the Holy Spirit's work in man may be refuted, as our Lord Jesus Christ shows in His last conversation with His disciples on the evening before His death. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit's work in the believers is one of surpassing beauty, power, and comfort.

It is with the intention of bringing out all these points that this little tract is issued. It sets forth the work of the Holy Spirit as summarized by Dr. Martin Luther in the Third Article of our holy Christian faith, making such applications of the doctrine to our present-day conditions as the subject seemed to require at this time. The entire essay was accepted by the Western District of the Missouri Synod at its meeting in 1922 and is now offered to a wider circle of readers and hearers in the hope that it may set many aright and keep them from pernicious error, at the same time urging them onward on the true way of sanctification.

St. Louis, Mo., February, 1924.

We shall treat of *The Baptism, or Gift, of the Holy Ghost* by considering it briefly in three theses:—

1. The baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost, in the more comprehensive sense of the term, comprises the entire work of sanctification: that He calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith.

2. The special baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost in the apostolic period, distinct from regeneration or conversion, consisted in this, that He endowed many believers of that day with extraordinary, miraculous gifts, such as speaking with tongues, foretelling the future, performing miracles, etc. On the basis of these facts, however, we dare not make the application of the enthusiasts to our times and conditions.

3. The special baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost in our days consists in this, that He often grants an extraordinary measure of understanding and certainty of our salvation, that He is a powerful Comforter and Protector in all dangers, tribulations, and afflictions, that He dispenses spiritual gifts, and that He grants to the servants of the Word the proper boldness in the work of their calling.

1.

The baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost, in the more comprehensive sense of the term, comprises the entire work of sanctification: that He calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith.

In speaking of the baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost in the more comprehensive sense of the term, we are guided by two considerations. In the first place, the word of the Lord in referring to the new life of the believers is very general. We read, Joel 2, 28: "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh." This statement is so comprehensive that we are compelled to understand it not only of the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, when, indeed, the miracle took place in extraordinary measure, Acts 2, 16—21, but of the baptism of the Spirit which all believers experience in sanctification, regardless of any extraordinary manifestations which might follow. That this is true appears also from Matt. 3, 15; Mark 1, 8; Luke 3, 16; John 1, 33; for the words, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," include the entire effect of the Holy Spirit's coming, not only in unusual and wonderful gifts, but in the sum total of spiritual blessings which are transmitted to believers through the Third Person of the Godhead. With the Holy Ghost and with fire the Lord approaches men, that is, His searching, purging power is exerted in the hearts of men. Christ gives to sinners His Holy Ghost for the renewal of their hearts, for the sanctification of their lives.

The second reason why we may speak of the baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost in the more comprehensive sense of the term, is this, that any special gift of the Holy Spirit is impossible unless the regeneration of the heart has gone before. The Holy Ghost never works

immediately, bringing about repentance and faith without the means of grace, nor does He dispense unusual qualities and powers for the building up of His kingdom to unbelievers and enemies of the Word. In other words, there can never be *charismata* of the Holy Spirit unless the *dorea* of the Holy Spirit has gone before.

The gift of the Holy Spirit in this sense comprises the entire work of sanctification. St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians: "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. 2, 13. As the result of God's gracious call through the Gospel which Paul had preached to the Thessalonians, they were sure of their redemption in and through Jesus, and because this faith lived in their hearts, its Source and Author, the Holy Spirit, was able to continue His work of sanctification in them. Another passage of the same import is 1 Pet. 1, 2, where Peter addresses the Christians to whom he is writing as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The Christians are elected, chosen out of the world, out of the great mass of those for whom the redemption of Jesus Christ was earned, in this way, that God selected, appointed them to be His own before the ages of the world. This resolution, or plan, of God was carried out in time in this way, that the Christians are sanctified, separated from the world, consecrated to God. The result is that faith is kindled in the Christian's heart, that he receives the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins through the shedding of the innocent blood of Christ, and that he leads a life consecrated to his heavenly Father.

All this is the work of the Holy Spirit, as our Confessions rightly state. We read (Sol. Decl., *Conc. Trigl.*, 901): "By this preaching, namely, of the Law and the Gospel, God collects an eternal Church for Himself from the human race and works in the hearts of men true repentance and knowledge of sins and true faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. And by this means, and in no other way, namely, through His holy Word, when men hear it preached or read it, and the holy Sacraments, when they are used according to His Word, God desires to call all men to eternal salvation, draw them to Himself, and convert, regenerate, and sanctify them. . . . For the preaching and hearing of God's Word are instruments of the Holy Ghost, by, with, and through which He desires to work efficaciously and to convert men to God and to work in them both to will and to do."

The teachers of our Church have rightly devoted much space in their books on doctrinal theology to the doctrine of sanctification, for it is most intimately connected with the Christian's daily life. Moreover, the inner acts, the occurrences and activities within the heart of man, as he is influenced by the Holy Spirit through the

Word, are described in detail in various passages of the Bible. We have become accustomed, therefore, to naming these acts of the Holy Spirit in a certain order. We speak of His vocation, or call, of illumination, of regeneration, of conversion, of repentance, of faith, of justification, of the mystical union with the Triune God, of renovation, preservation of faith and holiness, and of glorification (Hollaz), or, in the order more recently adopted in our country (Hoenecke), of vocation, illumination, regeneration in the narrower sense, conversion, justification, mystical union, and sanctification in the narrower sense. These acts are not to be separated so much as though they were divided in time, as in the order of logical sequence.

All this is included in the Small Catechism of Luther as we use it in our schools. For there we confess that *the Holy Ghost has called us by the Gospel*. It is absolutely necessary that the Holy Spirit do this, for all men are by nature spiritually blind, dead in trespasses and sins, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. Eph. 2, 12. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. 12, 3. Therefore the call of the Lord went out to us, calling us out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Pet. 2, 9. St. Paul exultingly writes: "God hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1, 9. The invitation which called us to faith was a holy call, for it was issued by the holy God, applied by the Holy Ghost, and has for its object a life of consecration in grateful appreciation of the reconciliation made for all men and imparted to us by faith. The Gospel not only tells us that salvation is prepared for all men, for us, but it constitutes also an invitation to come and enjoy the wonderful gifts of God's grace. Through the Gospel the Holy Ghost makes us first-fruits of the Spirit, of Himself, gives us a guarantee of the heavenly glory prepared for us. Rom. 8, 23. Ordinarily, then, the general baptism of the Spirit is that which takes place in the Sacrament of Baptism, as St. Paul writes: "According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior." Titus 3, 6, 7.

We state furthermore that *the Holy Ghost has enlightened us with His gifts*. He has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Pet. 2, 9. Whereas it was formerly true of us also that our understanding was darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in us, because of the blindness of our hearts, Eph. 4, 18, and that, in consequence, we were darkness, utter, impenetrable spiritual darkness, we are now a light in the Lord. Eph. 5, 8. We are now able to receive, to understand, the things of the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. 2, 14—16. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," or rather, "It is our God that said, Out of darkness light shall shine, who has shined in our hearts for the enlightenment of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4, 6. The great miracles of God for the salvation of

men, of which natural man can in no wise have a proper understanding, have been revealed to us, they stand out plainly before us, through the work of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel. This He does with His gifts, as dispensed in the Gospel, as imparted to men through the means of grace. It seems that Luther purposely used this expression in order to ward off the teaching of the Mystics, who idly waited for an immediate revelation, an illumination without means.

We finally confess that *the Holy Ghost sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith*. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2, 10. That is the result of our regeneration, of our new spiritual birth, that we are created unto good works, that we are fitted for performing them, and that we are willing to do them. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Rom. 5, 5. By virtue of His act we are filled with that love, it is communicated to us abundantly, it is the mainspring of the new life in us. We, who have the nature of the Spirit, who are born anew out of the Spirit, have only one aim, namely, that of performing His works and bringing forth His fruits. Rom. 8, 5; Gal. 5, 22. Because we are children of God by the new spiritual birth which has taken place in us, therefore this Spirit moves, urges, leads us on to a life of sonship, to a behavior in full harmony with the will of our heavenly Father. Rom. 5, 14. We have the true liberty of the sons of God, because the Spirit of the Lord dwells in us, 2 Cor. 3, 17, and therefore we carefully guard against grieving the Holy Spirit of God, Eph. 4, 30. Since the love of God lives in us, it has the effect of purifying our souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren. 1 Pet. 1, 22. We know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, in that wonderful mystical union of which Christ speaks John 15, because He has given us of His Spirit, 1 John 4, 13. And that same Spirit is the earnest of our eternal hopes. 2 Cor. 1, 22; 5, 5. He makes us sure and keeps us sure of our heritage in heaven. Eph. 1, 13, 14.

All these great facts pertaining to our salvation are of special interest to us in connection with our present topic in two respects. In the first place, a proper consideration of them will make us conscious of our own unworthiness in being the recipients of such immeasurable blessings of the grace of God in Christ Jesus; it will make us properly grateful to the Lord for giving us the doctrine of sanctification in all its truth and purity in our confessions and in our teaching; it will, above all, tend to keep us from dead orthodoxy, for a mere confession of the mouth and pen without a corresponding application of the truth in our conduct and life leads to a formalism which is worse than false belief in secondary doctrines. And, in the second place, the present thesis with its discussion is basic for the remainder of the essay, for it is evident that there can be no special baptism, or gift, of the Holy Spirit except in the case of such as are regenerated people, born anew by the water of Baptism, children of God, and therefore under the constant guidance of the Word of God.

2.

The special baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost in the apostolic period, distinct from regeneration or conversion, consisted in this, that He endowed the believers of that day with extraordinary miraculous gifts, such as speaking with tongues, prophesying, performing miracles, etc. On the basis of these facts, however, we dare not make the application of the enthusiasts to our times and conditions.

We state here, first of all, that there was a special baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost in the apostolic period, distinct from regeneration or conversion. This is evident from a number of passages. When Jesus was at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, He made a special application of the custom of pouring out the water of the pool of Siloam, crying out: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Now the evangelist, in explaining this saying of Christ, remarks: "But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7, 37—39. According to this word, people who already had faith should receive the Spirit. Now, the special revelation of the Spirit, the Pentecostal miracle, had not yet taken place, for Jesus had not yet finished His earthly work to enter into the glory of His Father. Furthermore, the Pentecostal miracle in itself is proof of the fact that this baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost is not the same as regeneration; for there men who were believers, disciples of the Lord, received the Holy Ghost with peculiar manifestations. Thus, also, in Acts 19, 2. 3 we read: "Paul said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Note that he presupposes faith in their case, that he believes them to have been converted. He was clearly speaking of the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost, which was vouchsafed to so many converts in those days, as v. 6 shows.

Yet the special gift of the Holy Ghost presupposes regeneration or conversion in the heart of man. We read of Simon Magus that he believed, which may very well refer to an honest belief of the heart and not to a mere outward confession. Yet when his heart was once more filled with covetousness, with the lust for money, and faith thus had been driven away, he was most severely reprimanded by Peter, who said to him: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money!" Acts 8, 18—22. It is only in a heart which has been born anew, which is filled with spiritual life, that the Holy Ghost can and will live, and therefore regeneration is a necessary preliminary condition for the special gift of the Holy Spirit.

Our next question is: What does the Bible tell us about this special gift of the Holy Ghost? In one of the Messianic passages of the prophet Isaiah he describes the spiritual devastation which would come upon the nation, "until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." Is. 32, 15. Again we read, in the passage which

was commonly thought to be fulfilled on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed and My blessing upon thy offspring," Is. 44, 3, the prophecy which, according to John's interpretation, was fulfilled in the Pentecostal miracle. The well-known passage from the prophet Joel, chapter 2, 28—32, was referred to above. Peter himself quotes it in his great sermon on Pentecost Day, placing the greatest stress on the extraordinary manifestations which attended the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The prophecy of Zechariah, chap. 12, 10, is also cited as including not only the ordinary work of sanctification, but an unusual measure of grace in the gift of effective prayer: "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplications."

Turning to the New Testament, we likewise find that special gifts of the Spirit are mentioned, and that an unusual measure of the Spirit's power is ascribed to certain believers. On the evening of Easter Day, as Luke reports, the Lord not only had a long conversation with His disciples, in the course of which He opened their understanding of the Old Testament, but He also directed them to "tarry in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24, 49. This was a more specific promise even than that of His last speeches in the upper room and on the way to Gethsemane, John 14—16; for the blessings there spoken of, although promised in the first place to the apostles, would, through them, be passed on to the believers of all times, since their testimony would lead men to repentance and faith until the end of time. On the day of His ascension, also, the Lord once more gave His disciples a definite promise. "He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1, 4, 5.

Although the gift of the Holy Ghost, then, was promised to all believers in conversion, and all the general promises so state, the Lord made a specific statement applying certain gifts to the disciples in an extraordinary measure, as the miracle of Pentecost shows. For on that day, in agreement with the promise of the Lord made for the last time ten days before, they, the apostles assembled probably in one of the Temple-halls, "were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2, 4. These men, who by their own unanimous confession had been believers in the Messiahship of Jesus for several years, were here filled with the Holy Ghost in such a way that they received linguistic qualifications, knowledge, and boldness which they had never possessed before. Similar phenomena became the order of the day in the apostolic period. There is, for instance, the story of Cornelius of Caesarea and his household. We read that, "while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many

as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 10, 44. 45. Thus the special gift, or power, of the Holy Spirit is spoken of, in this way it was manifested.

We find, furthermore, that in most cases the special act of laying on of hands accompanied the imparting of the Spirit, and that a distinct filling with the Holy Ghost, in addition to that taking place in regeneration, is spoken of. Even in the Old Testament the expression: "The Spirit of the Lord came upon" some person is found in numerous places, as in the story of Gideon, Judg. 6, 34, that of Samson, Judg. 14, 19, that of Saul, 1 Sam. 11, 6, and others. Still oftener the special gift of the Holy Ghost is mentioned in the times of the apostles. Thus we read of the congregation of Jerusalem and of its ministers: "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness." Acts 4, 31. Concerning the congregations in Samaria we are told: "When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost (for as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost," Acts 8, 14. 17, as the context shows, in the form of a special gift. Paul also received this gift by the laying on of hands of Ananias. Acts 9, 12. 17. Nevertheless, Luke relates of him and Barnabas, who also had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts 11, 24, that they were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost after their experience at Antioch in Pisidia, when they were driven out of the city and traveled on to Iconium, Acts 13, 52. The strange story of the disciples whom Paul met at Ephesus has been touched upon, Acts 19, 1—6, as also that of Cornelius and his household, Acts 10, 44. 45.

Some of the passages quoted till now indicate very plainly wherein the special gift, or baptism, of the Holy Ghost in apostolic times consisted, namely, in this, that He endowed the believers of that day with extraordinary, miraculous gifts, such as speaking with tongues, prophesying, and performing other miracles. The gift of tongues in the apostolic period clearly had two manifestations, namely, that of being able to speak a foreign language without the necessity of learning it by a more or less laborious process and that of using an utterly unknown tongue, uttered apparently in a condition of ecstasy and not in ordinary rational speech. The first gift is that of the Day of Pentecost, for we read: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2, 4. But their speech was fully intelligible to people coming from the various countries whose language they spoke by such a miraculous manifestation, as the hearers themselves confess: "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." V. 11. We have no evidence that this gift was found outside the circle of the apostles in those days, although this is by no means excluded, for the rapid spread of Christianity would argue

rather to the contrary. — Of the other special gift of tongues we read 1 Cor. 14. It is peculiar that Paul, who there says of himself that he possessed this gift more than all the members of the Corinthian congregation, rather discourages them from desiring it. "Paul had had ecstatic experiences far beyond the amount vouchsafed to the average Christian; he had experienced the power of this gift of grace in a much higher degree than the Corinthians. But in spite of that fact he frankly states that in church assembly he would rather speak five words with his understanding, in every-day, intelligible language, in order that he might teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. The utterances of tongues might indicate an unusual power, an extraordinary intimacy with the Spirit, but they were not serviceable, they did not result in the betterment of the congregation." (*Popular Commentary.*) Cp. Acts 11, 46. The gifts were valued by the Apostolic Church, but only as subsidiary to the greater blessings of the Gospel.

The gift of prophecy was connected with a special action of the Holy Spirit even in the Old Testament. Cp. 1 Kings 22, 24; 2 Chron. 18, 23. In the Book of Acts this faculty is ascribed to the working of the Holy Ghost, in specific instances, in a number of passages. It is stated of Agabus, Acts 11, 28, that he signified by the Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world. Of the disciples at Ephesus we read: "When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied." Acts 19, 6. The disciples at Tyre, where Paul landed on his last trip to Jerusalem, said to him through the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem. Acts 21, 4. At Caesarea there were four daughters of Philip, the evangelist, who prophesied. In the same city Agabus, coming down from Judea, said to Paul: "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle." Acts 21, 11.

But there are also other gifts mentioned, which, if not peculiar to the apostolic period, certainly appear in a most unusual measure in the Christians of that day. Timothy had some special gift, evidently that of presenting matters of the Word of God clearly. 1 Tim. 4, 14; 2 Tim. 1, 6. He is admonished by Paul not to neglect this gift, but to rekindle it, lest the work of the Lord suffer in consequence. The same gift is spoken of by Peter. 1 Pet. 4, 10, 11. Of the various gifts used in the ministry of the Word and in the administration of the external affairs of the congregation St. Paul speaks Rom. 12, 6—8: "Having, then, gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us: whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." We shall discuss below whether these gifts must be considered confined to the time of the apostles. For the present it will suffice to emphasize that all these were found in the early Christian congregations.

The most comprehensive passage concerning the special gifts of

the Holy Spirit in the early days of the Church is 1 Cor. 12, 4—11: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another, faith, by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." (*Popular Commentary*, II, 66. 146. 147.) Such, in brief, were the special gifts of the Spirit in the time of the apostles, surely unusual, great, and wonderful, of very high importance and value to the Church in its early growth.

On the basis of these facts, however, we dare not make the application of the enthusiasts to our times and conditions. There are numerous sects in our days in which the tendency is more or less pronounced to make extravagant claims for themselves, to insist that the apostolic gifts of the Spirit are still found in the Church, and that, first, in the same degree; secondly, in the same number; thirdly, also bestowed in the same manner. Of the degree of gifts which are still found we shall speak in the next section. But what of the statement that all the gifts mentioned above are still found in the Church, including the gift of healing without the means of medicines, that of working miracles, that of foretelling the future, that of speaking with tongues? We know that the minds of many of our people are periodically agitated by people with extravagant assertions regarding their ability along the one or the other of these lines. We have the Divine Healers with us from time to time; the Church of the Pentecostal Nazarenes and the Holy Rollers are working havoc in smaller circles with their alleged gift of tongues, and the veil of the future is rudely shaken by people who insist that they know its secrets. In the same degree that the sound proclamation of the Word of God decreases, the spread of superstition increases. It is not that we wish to question the possibility of the imparting of such gifts in our days (cp. mission history), but that we are distinctly warned to try the spirits, to test them by means of the Word of God. We read: "If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the word of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord, your God, proveth you to know whether ye love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord, your God, and fear Him and keep His commandments and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him and cleave unto Him." Deut. 13, 1—4. If we apply this test to the so-called miracle-workers of our days, we shall soon find that they are far from the truth.

But the most dangerous people are those who approach us with new revelations, whether these be the result of an inner light or of

miraculous discoveries or of supernatural manifestations, insisting that the Holy Spirit speaks to them without the means of grace, without the Word. This is the most dangerous form of false enthusiasm, because it seems to make a peculiar impression upon a certain class of people. 2 Tim. 3, 6. 7. It seems strange that, whereas even Peter called the attention of his readers to the more sure Word of Prophecy, urging them to take heed thereto, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, these fanatics prate of new revelations, direct communications, keys to the Scripture, and similar inventions of their own foolish minds. Instead of heeding such calls as Is. 8, 20: "To the Law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," and Luke 16, 29: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them," they proclaim their own inventions as the Word of God.

For this reason our Confessions denounce every form of false enthusiasm with great vehemence. We read in the Smalcald Articles: "In those things which concern the spoken, outward Word we must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit or grace to no one except through or with the preceding outward Word, in order that we may thus be protected against the enthusiasts, *i. e.*, spirits who boast that they have the Spirit without and before the Word and accordingly judge Scripture or the spoken Word and explain and stretch it at their pleasure." (*Conc. Trigl.*, 495.) Again, in the Formula of Concord: "Also, we reject and condemn the error of the Enthusiasts, who imagine that God without means, without the hearing of God's Word, also without the use of the holy Sacraments, draws men to Himself and enlightens, justifies, and saves them. (Enthusiasts we call those who expect the heavenly illumination of the Spirit [celestial revelations] without the preaching of God's Word.)" (*Conc. Trigl.*, 789. Cp. 311, 13; 880, 4; 898, 46.) Of the many passages in the writings of Luther the following quotation may suffice: "Christ will not permit you to flutter back and forth, to seek or to dream a spirit, that one may say: I have it by communication (*Einsprechen*) of the Holy Ghost. Yea, by inspiration of the abominable devil (*des leidigen Teufels*) you may have it. . . . Such communication Christ does not want, but binds men to the Word alone; He does not want to have the Holy Spirit separated from the Word. Therefore, if you hear some one boast that he has something by inspiration or communication of the Holy Ghost, and it is without the Word of God, no matter what it may be, you just say that it is the abominable devil. Christ does not want to bind you to anything else than to His mouth and Word; He will not permit you to flit about, but you should hear His Word, as He says: 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'" (7, 2388.) And so we also continue to take a determined stand against all false enthusiasm (*Schwaermerei*).

3.

The special baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost in our days consists in this, that He often grants an extraordinary measure of understanding and certainty of salvation, that He is a powerful Comforter

and Protector in all dangers, tribulations, and afflictions, that He dispenses spiritual gifts, and that He grants to the servants of the Word the proper boldness in the work of their calling.

There is a special baptism, or gift, of the Holy Ghost even in our days. This fact is very plainly stated in the passages referred to above, for the words of John: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," Matt. 3, 11; Mark 1, 8; Luke 3, 16; John 1, 26, 33, are so general in scope that they must be applied to the believers of all times. It is true that Christ, Acts 1, 5, uses the same expression in prophesying the miracle of Pentecost, but, as the story of this miracle itself shows, and as Peter indicates in his great sermon, the gift of the Spirit spoken of cannot be restricted to the unusual manifestations which were found in the hall of the Temple where the sermon of Peter was probably held, on that great day. Of the apostles, indeed, it is said that they were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance, Acts 2, 4, and Peter states of Christ: "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear," v. 33; but Peter himself evidently has in mind not only such extraordinary occurrences as that of the gift of tongues, for he answers upon the anxious question of those of his hearers who were "pricked in their heart," "What shall we do?" by giving them the directions: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord, our God, shall call." Vv. 37—39. The gift spoken of here is clearly that of the Holy Ghost, whose essential part is the remission of sins, and faith, which trusts in this remission. For if this were not true, if we should insist that all believers everywhere experience the miracle of Pentecost in themselves in the same manner and in the same degree as the apostles did, then the promise would necessarily include the ability to preach in strange languages without preparation of any kind. That this is not the scope of the text is shown by the fact that no miraculous happenings are recorded in the case of the three thousand souls who were added to the Christian congregation of Jerusalem on that day. That they received the gift of the Holy Ghost in baptism is plainly stated. Moreover, the usual, normal consequence of this fact happened, namely, that they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers. V. 42. On that day at least the Lord does not seem to have indued all the members of the congregation of Jerusalem with special miraculous powers. He did so later, as when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness. Acts 4, 31.* Thus we see, both that there is a special gift of the

* From this it does not follow that the baptism, or gift, of the Spirit is synonymous with "being filled with the Spirit," an expression which seems to be always associated with extraordinary powers.

Spirit to the Christians of all times, and that this gift is to be distinguished from the Holy Ghost's act of conversion. It is rather the consequence and result of conversion, its manifestations being that of the life of the Spirit, the understanding of the Word, the outgrowth of the mystical union between the Spirit and the believer, John 14, 18; 1 Cor. 3, 16; 6, 19; Gal. 3, 27; Eph. 2, 22. Hoenecke writes: "The essence of the mystical union consists in this, that God, according to His substance, in a miraculous manner, is near to the substance of man and permeates it with His essence, and that, by this indwelling in the believers, He also works this in them, that they are filled with knowledge and with all the fulness of God. Eph. 3, 17—19." (*Dogmatik*, III, 410.)

This word, "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God," expresses what is stated in our thesis in describing the manner in which the special gift of the Spirit manifests itself in Christians up to this day. St. Paul writes that the believers will be filled unto all the fulness of God, that this goal may and should be reached by them. It is a fulness of grace possessed and bestowed by God, the full measure of His gracious gifts, to which the apostle has reference. Upon this measureless source the believers draw, increasing daily in virtues and blessings as vessels of God's mercy; themselves the possessors of boundless resources of love and expending freely thereof to the praise and honor of God.

God *grants* this gift. Christ plainly teaches: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!" Luke 11, 13. Jesus is here not speaking of the initial gift of the Spirit, by virtue of which a person is regenerated, for no man can call Jesus Lord (and therefore also not rightly pray to Him) but by the Holy Ghost. And that by the gift of the Spirit the Lord grants an understanding and certainty of salvation we see from these and other passages. St. Paul writes that we have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and that, by virtue of this gift, we wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. 8, 26. This is not an immediate certainty or one based upon our feelings, but it is the assurance of the Spirit through the Word. This is very plainly shown by the apostle when he writes: "And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." 1 John 3, 23. 24. Do we always in the measure that we should make use of this gift of the understanding and the certainty of our salvation on the basis of God's promises?

We state further in our thesis that the Holy Spirit, to this day and hour, is a powerful Comforter in all dangers, tribulations, and

afflictions which beset the Christians. This assurance, in fact, follows from truths just discussed. For if we are filled with all joy and peace in believing and abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, Rom. 15, 13, and if we are strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, Eph. 3, 16, then we lay aside both self-confidence and self-consciousness and cheerfully and confidently look to Him for comfort and protection. It is this factor which is stressed by Paul when he writes: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." Rom. 8, 26. It is this fact which caused David to pray: "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." Ps. 51, 11. But the most beautiful passages pertaining to this point are those of the last discourses of Jesus, on the eve of His death: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14, 26. And again: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me." John 15, 26. Strange and wonderful words! The Comforter, the Paraclete, is to come. This word embraces a wonderful measure of consolation; for it tells us that the Holy Ghost will admonish, instruct, stand by, assist, strengthen, be an Advocate, comfort, and confirm us, that His work consists chiefly in imparting an edifying and strengthening power, and all by and through the words of Christ, as the text has it, through His Word, which is truth. If we use the Holy Scriptures to find Christ, to study His message to men, to be established in faith, then His Spirit will comfort, uphold, strengthen, and protect us so that we shall fear no evil and in the very midst of death see nothing but life, everlasting, glorious life. It is this fact which caused Luther to devote so much space in His writings to the explanation of these passages. He writes: "Auf dass wir ja nicht verzagen, so sagt er: Ich will euch senden einen Troester, und einen solchen, der da allmaechtig ist. Und nennt den Heiligen Geist allhier einen Troester; denn ob mich gleich meine Suende und die Furcht des Todes bloede machen, so kommt er her und ruehret mein Herz und spricht: Hui, frisch hinan! Also blaeset er uns einen Mut ein, spricht uns freundlich und troestlich zu, dass wir nicht verzagen vor dem Tode, sondern frisch hinangehen, wenn wir gleich zehn Haelse haetten, und sagen: Ei, wiewohl ich Suende habe, noch dennoch sind sie hindurch; und wenn ich ihrer noch mehr haette, dass sie ueber mir zusammenschluegen, so will ich doch hoffen, dass sie mir nicht schaden sollen. Nicht dass man die Suende nicht empfinden sollte, — denn das Fleisch muss sie empfinden, — sondern der Geist ueberwindet und unterdrueckt die Bloedigkeit und Furcht und fuehrt uns hindurch; denn er ist maechtig genug dazu." (11, 995.) And again: "Dass wir Gottes Kinder sind und uns gewisslich dafuerhalten moegen, das haben wir nicht von uns selbst noch aus dem Gesetz, sondern es ist des Heiligen Geistes Zeugnis, der wider das Gesetz und das Fuehlen unserer Unwuerdigkeit solches zeuget in unserer Schwachheit und uns des gewiss macht. Solch Zeugnis gehet

also zu, dass wir die Kraft des Heiligen Geistes, so er durchs Wort in uns wirkt, auch fuehlen und empfinden, und unsere Erfahrung mit dem Wort oder Predigt uebereinstimmt; denn das kannst du je bei dir fuehlen, wo du in Not und Angst Trost empfaengst aus dem Evangelio und damit solchen Zweifel und Schrecken ueberwindest, dass dein Herz festiglich schliessen kann, du habest einen gnaedigen Gott, und [du] nun nicht mehr vor ihm fliehst, sondern in solchem Glauben ihn froehlich anrufen kannst und Hilfe von ihm gewarten; und wo solcher Glaube besteht, so folgt auch die Erfahrung, dass dir geholfen wird, wie St. Paulus Roem. 5, 4. 5 sagt: „Geduld bringet Erfahrung, Erfahrung bringet Hoffnung, Hoffnung aber laesst nicht zuschanden werden.“ . . . Das ist das rechte innerliche Zeugnis, dabei du erkennest, dass der Heilige Geist in dir wirkt; daneben hast du auch aeusserliche Zeugnisse und Wahrzeichen, dass er dir gibt sonderliche Gaben, feinen geistlichen Verstand, Gnade und Glueck zu deinem Beruf usw., dass du Lust und Liebe hast zu seinem Wort, dasselbe vor aller Welt bekennst mit Gefahr Leibes und Lebens; item, dass du dem gottlosen Wesen und Suenden feind werdest und widerstehst usw. Welches alles nicht tun noch vermoegen die Unchristen, so den Heiligen Geist nicht haben. Wiewohl es wahr ist, dass auch noch dieses bei den Heiligen in grosser Schwachheit zugehet; aber doch der Heilige Geist in solcher Schwachheit die Christen regiert und solch Zeugnis staerkt, wie abermal St. Paulus Roem. 8, 26 sagt: „Der Geist hilft unserer Schwachheit auf.“ (12, 794.) In view of these facts, isn't it true that we constantly need the admonition of St. Paul: "Be filled with the Spirit"? Eph. 5, 18.

The gifts considered till now are such as all Christians possess and should make use of to a much larger degree than is usually done. But in the next category named in our thesis there is a diversity, together with degrees. We say that the Holy Ghost dispenses spiritual gifts also in our days, namely, certain *charismata* which He intends to keep in the Church till the end of time. It is very plainly stated: "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. 4, 7. The passage in the Epistle to the Romans speaks in the tone of a self-evident, undisputed truth: "Having, then, gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us," Rom. 12, 6, and the gifts of prophesying, of ministering, of teaching, of exhorting, of giving, of ruling, of showing mercy are enumerated. If we understand prophesying of Scriptural interpretation, its most likely meaning, then all these gifts are found in the Church in our days and should therefore be exercised in accordance with the will of God. The passage 1 Cor. 12, 7—11 opens with the express statement: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Of the gifts here mentioned by the apostle, as Walther writes (*Epistel-Postille*, 334), "four have disappeared entirely out of the Christian Church, the other five are still to be found, though in a smaller measure. The gift to heal without the application of medicines, the gift to perform other miracles, the gift to speak strange languages which one has never learned, have

disappeared entirely. But this is not the case with the other gifts mentioned by the apostles, namely, with the gifts of speaking of wisdom and knowledge through the Spirit, with the gift of prophesying, that is, of expounding the Scriptures, with the gift of an unusually high, strong, and heroic faith, and finally with the gift to distinguish between the spirits." The question naturally suggests itself: Are these gifts being used and exercised in the Church? Are we using the gifts, the talents, entrusted to us by the Lord in the unceasing, determined effort to carry forward His work and to build His kingdom? Are we applying ourselves to our task of speaking the wisdom and knowledge from on high, of opening up the riches of God's Word by a diligent and careful exposition, of placing our faith, in childlike confidence, in Him alone, and of proving the spirits, that is, the false teachers who present themselves on all sides, in a calm, dispassionate, convincing manner?

Our final statement is that the Holy Spirit grants to the servants of the Word the proper boldness in the work of their calling. The basis for this statement is given 2 Cor. 4, 6, where we read, literally: "For it is God that said, Out of darkness light shall shine, who has shined in our hearts for the enlightenment of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This function of the converted people, accordingly, is not confined to the pastors, but every believer who has experienced the illuminating power of God in his own heart will, in turn, act as a light-tower to lead others to know Christ as their Lord and be saved. Nevertheless, this work is performed especially by the pastors; it is their special function to speak the Word with boldness.

This was so in apostolic times. Peter announces to the multitude on the Day of Pentecost that he wants to speak to them with boldness. Acts 2, 29. The same boldness was shown by Peter and John, Acts 4, 13, by Paul, Acts 9, 29, of whom we even read that he was pressed in the spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ, Acts 18, 5. Cp. Acts 28, 31. This boldness was no mere oratorical power and vehemence, but an openness of speech combined with fearlessness, so that one will not be daunted or turned from his purpose by opposition and objections, but, firm in the conviction of the justice and truth of his position, will not hesitate to proclaim this fact as occasion requires, yea, even in season and out of season.

This boldness is required of a true servant of Jesus Christ in our days as certainly as in the days of Peter and Paul. To this day and hour it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth. 1 John 5, 6. St. Peter writes: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." 1 Pet. 4, 10, 11. This includes not only a strict adherence to the words of the Bible, but also a fearless presentation of the eternal verities of the Bible. Every pastor, every teacher, every servant of the Word, should be able to say with St. Paul: "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but

in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." 1 Cor. 2, 4. We have the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, Eph. 6, 17, and therefore have nothing to fear. We have the promise of the Lord that we shall be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. Eph. 3, 16.

In the light of these and other passages it certainly seems of prime importance that we examine ourselves carefully as we stand upon the threshold leading to the fourth quarter of the first century of our beloved Synod. In an unpublished manuscript of the sainted Dr. Stoeckhardt we read: "If the men belonging to the teaching body of a church denomination have lost the full *plerophoria* and *par-rhesia* of speaking and witnessing, then the inevitable consequence is droopiness, weariness, half-heartedness in every department of church life and activity." It is necessary that we, to a decidedly larger extent and degree, take advantage of the mystical union with the Triune God in general and the Holy Spirit in particular. He lives in our hearts by faith, He comes to us anew every day in His Word, we have His power at our disposal to the extent that He feels He can make use of our talents. We have the promise of His blessings in home, school, and church. It is necessary, absolutely necessary, that we show a greater amount of proper enthusiasm, greater earnestness, greater power for more effective work in the Church. Relying upon the promises of the Gospel, we must strive with greater zeal for the best gifts and use them, in His power, to the best of our ability.

The talent of time is ours: let us make every minute count for the work of the Lord! We have the opportunities, on every hand, in every community, here in our own country in home mission work, and across the sea in foreign mission work: let us make the most of every opportunity! We have the Word of God in all its purity, the Sacraments according to the institution of Christ: let us use greater zeal in making known the blessings which have been given us to do business with! Let us daily turn from the sluggishness which threatens to beset us. Let us study the Holy Scriptures with greater love. Let us surrender ourselves wholly to the guidance of God, in true obedience to His Holy Spirit. Acts 5, 32. Let us desire the power of His Spirit in daily and hourly fervent prayer. We have the fine exposition of Dr. Pieper on prayer (*Dogmatik* III, 94 ff.), we have the fine prayers of Luther with their heaven-storming confidence. Let us make use of prayer, let us make use also of the Holy Communion, the feast of His love and mercy, in which our great Physician not only gives us healing balm for the wounds and sores of our sin, but also medicine filled with heavenly power to walk in the way of His good pleasure.

We close with one of Luther's prayers: "Lord God, dear Father, who through Thy Holy Spirit hast taught and enlightened the hearts of Thy believers, grant us through the same Spirit to have a right understanding and at all times to rejoice in His comfort and power, through Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

